

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed December 15, 2004 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment and following remarks have been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-13, and 15-20 are now pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 12-14, 18, and 19 stand rejected. Claims 4, 7, and 14 have been canceled. Claims 2, 4, 5, 8-11, 15-17, and 19 are objected to.

The objection to the drawings is respectfully traversed. Specifically, Figure 4 has been amended to more clearly identify the steam inlet with reference number 138. The attached sheet of replacement drawings includes changes to Figure 4. This replacement sheet including Figure 4, replaces the original sheet which included Figure 4. No new matter has been added. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request the objections to the drawings be withdrawn.

The objection to Claim 7 is respectfully traversed, as Claim 7 has been canceled. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the objection to Claim 7 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 12-14, 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Lageder et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,779,435) is respectfully traversed.

Lageder et al. describe a low pressure steam turbine including an exhaust-steam space (3) defined between an outer and an inner casing (1 and 2, respectively). A top part (6) of the outer casing is formed by an assembly hood (19) and a frame part (20) that is coupled to a bottom part (7) of the outer casing. The assembly hood includes a pair of end walls (21) and stiffeners (22) as well as a vertical and horizontal connecting flange (23 and 24, respectively). Steam is supplied from an intermediate-pressure steam turbine to the assembly hood via a live steam connection piece (25) coupled to the assembly hood. A butterfly valve controls the flow of steam entering the assembly hood from the connection piece. The inner casing is coupled in flow communication to the butterfly valve to channel the steam flowing through the butterfly valve towards the low pressure turbine.

Claim 4 was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 4 has been canceled

IN THE DRAWINGS.

The attached sheet of replacement drawings includes changes to Figure 4. This replacement sheet including Figure 4, replaces the original sheet which included Figure 4. In Figure 4, the lead line for 138 has been amended to more clearly identify the steam inlet as reference number 138 as is described in the specification. No new matter has been added.

and independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations from Claim 4. Accordingly, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Lageder et al.

Claim 3 depends from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claim 3 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 3 likewise is patentable over Lageder et al.

Claim 6 recites a turbine exhaust hood comprising “a shell casing comprising an inner surface and an outer surface...a butterfly plate coupled to said shell casing inner surface for channeling flow into said exhaust hood...at least one corner flow plate having a conical cross-sectional profile that is configured to facilitate redirecting a direction of fluid flow flowing within said exhaust hood.”

Lageder et al. do not describe nor suggest a turbine exhaust hood as is recited in Claim 6. Specifically, Lageder et al. do not describe nor suggest a turbine exhaust hood that includes a butterfly plate coupled to the shell casing inner surface and at least one corner flow plate having a conical cross-sectional profile that is configured to facilitate redirecting a direction of fluid flow flowing within the exhaust hood. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Lageder et al. describe an inner casing having a spiral, nautilus-like, cross-sectional profile that is coupled in flow communication to a butterfly valve to redirect the fluid flowing within the exhaust hood. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 6 is submitted to be patentable over Lageder et al.

Claim 7 has been canceled. Claim 12 depends from independent Claim 6. When the recitations of Claim 12 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 6, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 12 likewise is patentable over Lageder et al.

Claim 13 recites a turbine assembly comprising “an exhaust hood comprising a shell casing, a support structure, at least one flow plate, and a butterfly plate...said butterfly plate coupled to said shell casing inner surface for channeling flow into said exhaust hood...said at least one flow plate is coupled to said shell casing to facilitate changing a flow direction of steam flowing through the exhaust hood such that flow separation losses are facilitated to be reduced.

Lageder et al. do not describe nor suggest a turbine assembly as is recited in Claim 13. Specifically, Lageder et al. do not describe nor suggest a turbine exhaust hood that includes a

butterfly plate coupled to the shell casing inner surface for channeling flow into said exhaust hood and at least one flow plate coupled to the shell casing to facilitate changing a flow direction of steam flowing through the exhaust hood such that flow separation losses are facilitated. Rather, in contrast to the present invention, Lageder et al. describe an inner casing having a spiral, nautilus-like, cross-sectional profile that is coupled in flow communication to a butterfly valve to redirect the fluid flowing within the exhaust hood. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 13 is submitted to be patentable over Lageder et al.

Claim 14 has been canceled. Claims 18 and 20 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 13. When the recitations of Claims 18 and 20 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 13, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 18 and 20 likewise are patentable over Lageder et al.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 12-14, 18, and 20 be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 4, 5, 8-11, 15-17, and 19 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 4 was canceled and independent Claim 1 was rewritten to include all of the limitations from Claim 4. Accordingly, Claim 1 is submitted to be in condition for allowance. Claims 2 and 5 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 4 and 5 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 4 and 5 likewise are in condition for allowance.

With respect to Claims 8-11, Claims 8-11 depend, directly or indirectly from independent Claim 6 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 8-11 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 6, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 8-11 likewise are in condition for allowance.

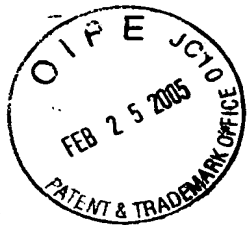
With respect to Claims 15-17 and 19, Claims 15-17 and 19 depend, directly or indirectly from independent Claim 13 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 15-17 and 19 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 13, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 15-17 and 19 likewise are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



Robert B. Reeser III
Registration No. 45,548
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070



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Annotated Sheet

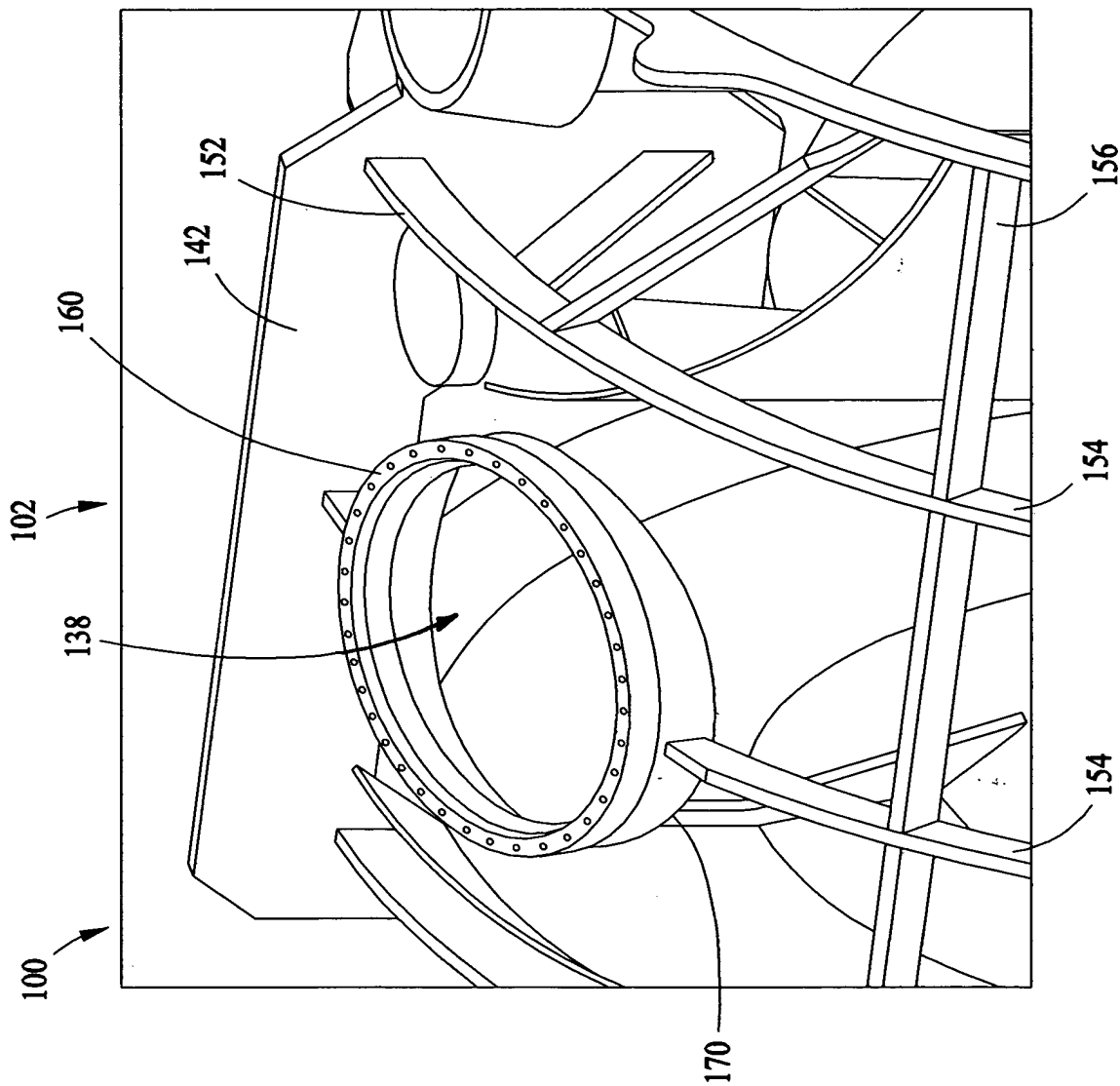


FIG. 4